ongo News Letter

DECEMBER 1957

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Christmas and New Year's
Greetings from Congo ★

v.49:4

CONGO NEWS LETTER

Vol. XLIX DECEMBER 1957 N° 4

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CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

STARS and snow, tinsel and toys, packages and parties, carols and candy canes, bells and gay baubles, Christmas anthems and angels — these words come crowding in upon one when he begins to think of Christmas, at least if he has been brought up in a northern climate.

But is that right ? Do these things spell out Christmas ? Was there any other time of the year when every one felt he simply must get home and be together with the family if it were humanly possible ? Was it the gifts and ribbons and holly? What brought old friends into remembrance, those whom we had scarcely thought of during the year, or those of whom we thought, but failed to write to, because we are always **so busy.** It did not seem like Christmas unless we sent a timely greeting to them, and in turn had a word from them assuring us of their friendship. What was there about that season of the year that drew all hearts, melted old resentments, and brought a warm glow into the mind and thoughts ?

Perhaps it was not even friends of whom we thought. There was a real desire to help others — to see that needy ones were warmed and fed, that lonely hearts were cheered. It may have been forgotten all too quickly once Christmas was past, but just then it was easy to say « God bless us, every one. »

But **is** that easy to say — sincerely ? Are we ready to accept His blessing ? Can He, indeed, bless us unless we are prepared ? Have we thought of that which we are requesting when we ask Him to bless us ? Asking for

His blessing implies accepting His conditions. Asking the Christ Child to « come into our home » must be accompanied by asking the Lord Jesus to come into our hearts. And if we admit Him at all, it must be as Lord.

What better time could there be than the lovely Christmas season to meditate on this and once more give oneself to Him ? For His coming to earth was for the purpose of becoming our Savior. « Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. »

No longer do we, who once lived up north, feel the need of snow squeaking under our feet as we go to the Christmas Eve service. Under a tropical sky, brilliant with stars, we arrive at a crowded church. There is no Christmas tree, no gift-giving. But there are sparkling eyes and expectant hearts. For there is the same wonderful story of the Baby and what His coming to earth has meant for us — not just for mankind in general, but for us individually, if we will but receive God's great gift. Here in Congo, many have accepted that gift at Christmas time and in return have offered themselves to Him.

It was not the angels' singing
Gave the Christmas thought,
Not the precious gold and incense
By the Wise Men brought ;
Not the shining star that led them
On their unknown way ;
'Twas the Christ within the manger
Made the Christmas Day.

FLINT.

Christmas Wishes

from an African brother

Christmas is the gift of a dying year
A birth, in time, as memory returns
To tell a dying world, God is here.
So while our turning world, with God returns,
Let Christmas bring us hope, and tender joy,
A keener urge for fine and finer life,
And wider sympathy which will employ
Love's lasting ecstacies in serving Life.

A. W. KAYPER-MENSAH.

An aerial view of the port of Léopoldville.

January

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THE MISSION SECRETARY SUMMARIZES

WHAT have been the accomplishments of the past year? How does our Congo work relate to the world stream of mission work? What are the goals before us?

The church work has moved forward in most places, but not at the same pace. The 5,600 baptisms indicate a lot of work done. The village school teacher is no longer the spearhead of church advance in the Lower Congo. Our methods have been changing along with conditions, but possibly we do need to map out a new plan for more attention to our commercial centers and other places where many people are congregating. Vanga has been the first to get started on this program.

When I think of our school work, I see a picture of an EPI student staring at a problem on the blackboard and scratching his head. The problems are clear enough before us, but what to do about them is not so clear. We have the children; they all need education; the demand for higher training schools is legitimate and urgent. The need for African leadership right now is pressing. Just to what extent an evangelical mission from an outside country is responsible for education en masse, or for general education in the higher branches, is not clear. The final attitude of the government as to what extent they want foreign missions to be responsible for education is also not yet clear. If we should drop out of general education and concentrate on leadership training for the church work, we would risk losing out on lay community leadership.

Also in the medical work I was amazed to learn that two of the large missions participating in I. M. E. no longer use I. M. E. graduates for their work because they cannot afford the salaries. Since adequate income for a mission hospital depends on the presence of a doctor, and since prospects of new doctors from home seem very dim, we may find we cannot carry on in the traditional way.

We rejoice over new missionaries and our first secondary school graduates and are looking forward to the first graduate of the Cour de Théologie. From now on we should look to the graduates of our higher schools to assume real responsibility in administration of churches, schools and eventually medical work as well.

Ferries were made before Bridges.

February

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INSPECTOR FORD : FERRIES ! BEDS ! SCHOOLS !

IT HAS been my habit in making these reports of the year's inspections to give the totals that might be interesting.

This year's total mileage runs to only about 10,400 miles; for during the two months I had to fill in as teacher at Banza Manteke and at Moanza I did not itinerate.

Only 20 different ferries were crossed although there were many repeated crossings on a number of these.

We saw three large herds of baboons on the Boko-Kikongo road and civet cats in various other places. One night while the lions were raging around Kikongo we took a little « hunting trip » in our pick-up. We saw one large animal — not a deer, it was too big; not a leopard, no spots; not a buffalo, not an elephant, it was too small. In short, we think we saw a lion.

Ten heads were « permanented », some of them twice during the year, and add to it one job done on my own.

This year I thought I would like to count the number of beds slept on — they all added up to 31 ½ !... Some of course were slept on repeatedly at different visits to or through stations and a road bed counts as **one** but it changes villages nearly every night. One bed was a station wagon when we got to a ferry that was out-of-commission. Fortunately we had along a bale of 100 blankets for the Boko hospital. One was the back of the pick-up when we arrived at a ferry too late to cross. That night we had no blankets along and it was COLD.

More meaningful statistics though are those that tell us that last year we had 29,298 students attending our schools. Of these 10,011 were girls — most in our first and second grade village schools; 19,287 were boys. We had 1,119 teachers of whom 429 were for accredited subsidized schools and 690 were in church-supported classes. Classes varied from kindergarten through 5th and 6th year primary or post-primary home-making schools for girls, to technical schools for clerks, carpenters or teachers or to preparatory and secondary classes.

The foundation of our shool work is **kintuadi** — the « togetherness » of church and mission, teachers, directors, pupils and their parents. But that which surpasses all of these, binding them together and strengthening them is the **kintuadi** of each individual worker and God.

Many still make their own clay pots in Congo.

March

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MBUNDANI, CONGO CHURCH CONVENTION

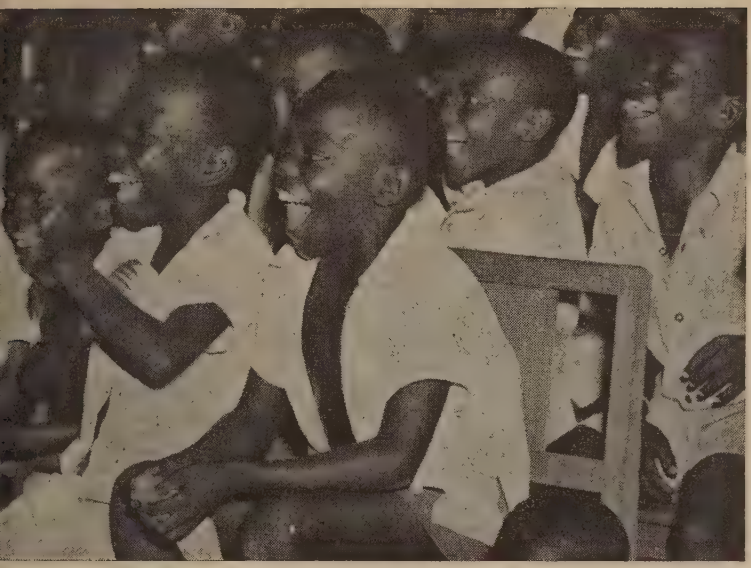
THE MBUNDANI general secretary (Jean V. Lubikulu) wrote two special letters this last year to our churches; a general letter on the subject of drinking, and a letter to the churches of Kikongo to remind them of their responsibilities in the schools. He also visited Kimpese to help the church there, attended the Congo Protestant Council meetings as an A.B.F.M.S. representative and attended the Mbundani meetings at Sona Bata.

Several important items were discussed at the latter : The continual shifting of missionaries from one station to another often discourages both the church and the missionaries. Only one or two years of working together can mean disharmony rather than advance and often means too many adjustements for both parties. Perhaps the present increase in missionary staff will lessen the need for so many changes.

Now that we have a representative from our African churches in the Congo Protestant Council meetings, we feel it is our responsibility to contribute to its budget and have asked each church to send a franc for each of its members. Of this, part will go to the C.P.C. and part toward the ticket of our representative (Mr. Lubikulu) to the Africa meetings in ACCRA. Each church has also been asked to contribute to **Envol,** the French-language magazine for Congolese Christians, in its effort to produce an edition in Kikongo.

Many are the enemies of the Congo church these days. Everything from revolution to drinking is the rule of the day. Particular evils which are fighting to possess the hearts of our people are... Jehovah's Witnesses... followers of Simon Kimbangu... Adventists... Dieudonné movement... Alcohol... and Old and New witchcraft from Africa and from the European countries. Everyone wants a happy life, but those evils will not lead to it. Many Africans think that anything the white people bring is good. Congolese Christians must learn and help others to choose wisely for themselves.

The only remedy I see is for us to work hard to build strong churches who put Jesus first. We must recruit and teach our leaders that our churches and church people may stand firm.



« Cinema's » mean that School Can be Fun too !

April

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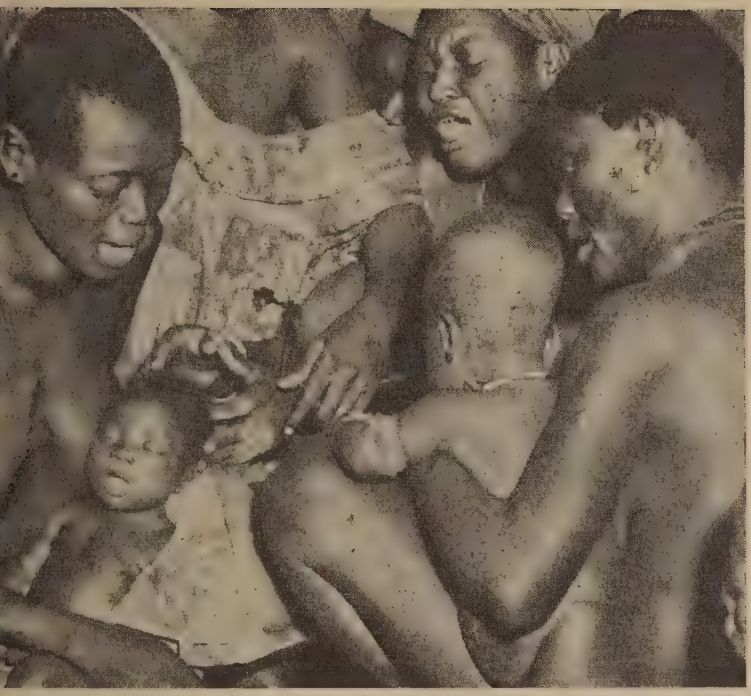
STEAMLINED « MATONDOS » AT BANZA MANTEKE

AS IS TRUE of all churches in the Congo, there are problems facing the Banza Manteke church which seem problems facing the Banza Manteke church which seem almost insurmountable. For years the church has nurtured many village and district schools. With the coming of subsidies, it was hoped that this burden would be lifted and the attitude has been to sit back and wait the building of schools by the government. We are trying to impress upon the churches that all the schools are still their children and have had some response, such as several new permanent school buildings and the making up of subsidized teachers' salaries by some churches... We are looking to our students at I.B. and the Theological course at E.P.I. to break the vicious circle of poor churches continuing partially to support poorly-trained pastors.

Matondos are part of the tradition of the church in the Bas-Congo with their three or four hour Sunday session of special choir numbers, unending offerings to the tune of **Vaneno,** baby dedications, receiving of new members and finally communion service with far too few cups to go around at one filling. We have been trying to vary these **matondos** with the introduction of literacy training classes; — several times our entire supply of Laubach primers has been quickly sold out —; women's meetings where this year's program is introduced to representative women from the villages; and the use of film strips for the Saturday evening service. An effort is made to introduce a wide variety of literature both in French and Kikongo to the village Christians. By more careful screening we are trying to make sure that the increase in baptisms of this past year will really mean permanent additions to the church.

A high point of the school life this year was the 3rd year Secondary class's excursion to visit their chief's ancestral grounds at San Salvador, the capitol of the old Kongo Kingdom. When this year's uniforms failed to arrive, the boys decided to invest their uniform money in the educational trip by truck to Portuguese Angola. They were impressed by the « ancient history », the ruined 15th century cathedral, the cemetery, and the great tree under which so many judgements and public executions had taken place.



Bayaka women grieve for a dead child.

May

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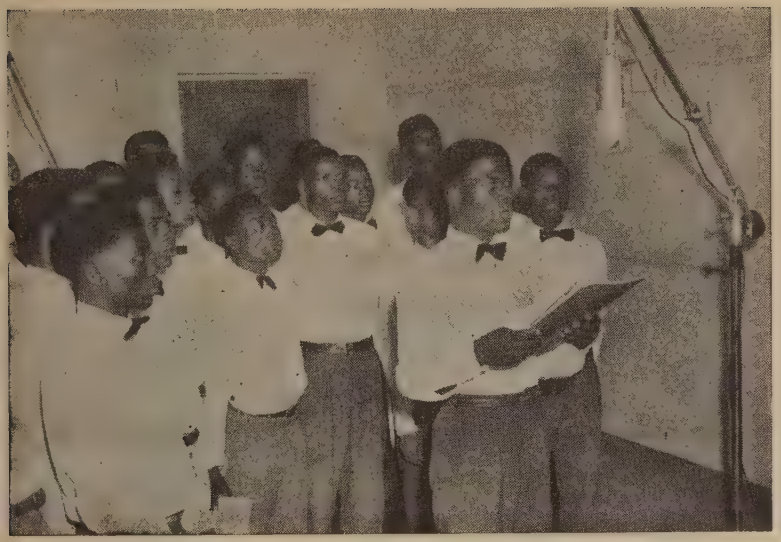
AT BOKO : ONE MUST PRAY

SEPTEMBER of last year brought with it new hope and aspirations. Students, teachers, and the educational missionary laid plans for the best school year yet. Building activity took on a new stride, for much must be accomplished before Mr. Scott went home on furlough. Even Miss Jorgenson and the medical work looked forward with anticipation to a great harvest of babies. We in the evangelistic work began to look forward to having a Church — our first church built of permanent materials among the Bayaka people.

If the building of a church should begin with prayer, as we think, then this church was built with much prayer. There was prayer at each of our out-stations. Plans and programs were made and put into action. People came from each of our outposts to carry rock. Old people, young people, men and women, boys and girls came. Up from the deep valley below, perspiring and tired but happy, they came in from their tasks at night after having carried many **steres** of rock. Day after day they carried, for two months, until over 300 **steres** of rock rested in racks, each a cubic meter. During this time, there were daily services for those who came in. The inquirers had classes to help them understand the meaning of being a Christian. Many of them were baptized.

The dedication of this new church building at Boko was probably the greatest climax of the year. One day before the dedication an old chief stood in the middle of the sanctuary, looking upward and all about. « Really, » he whispered to a man nearby, « when one comes in here, one must pray. »

There are many villagers in need of medical and surgical help around Boko. The people in much of the area are very backward and superstitious so many babies die from being treated with native medicines, from neglect and from lack of proper food. In almost three years of maternity work at Boko we have not lost a mother though most are very anemic and many babies are born with very low hemoglobin... We are thankful that God permits us to serve him through our medical as well as educational and evengelistic work at Boko.



The Kimpese choir with its talented young soloist.

June

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E. P. I. A Family School

THE INTENSIVE evangelistic work of the **Ecole de Pasteurs et d'Instituteurs** in the training of leaders — pastors, teachers and Christian home-makers, has greatly impressed the writer of this report who has just finished her first year on the E.P.I. faculty. The whole family is being educated to preach, to teach and to witness. As an example, a former **Mvungi** (unordained pastor) is now a student in the **Cours de Théologie.** His wife, enrolled in the Woman's School, while she learns how to care for her home, is also improving her knowledge of elementary school subjects and is moreover preparing for evangelistic work among women and children. They have their own children in the Kindergarten, in the Grammar school and in the **Ecole Secondaire** — a six year high school with specialized normal training the last three years. Many of the graduates of the **Ecole de Moniteurs** (4 years teacher's course); who feel called to be pastors, now return as students of the **Cours de Théologie.** We ask for the Lord's leading in their preparation for the great work of evangelizing the Congo people.

We are happy to report 62 baptisms. Forty-three of those baptized were primary school children. Some of those baptized came from the « Gare », an area around the railroad where we hope to build a chapel as soon as the land question is settled.

To a new member of the Faculty of E.P.I., it is shocking to see the large number of cases of Bilharzia. Several students in the graduating class of the Monitor's School were treated for this terrible sickness, contracted by bathing in infected streams. The treatment makes the patient suffer almost as much as the disease. We wonder if lack of knowledge on the part of the co-operating missions, lack of knowledge of Bilharzia or simply the usual « lack of money » has kept us from getting the needed water system which would keep the students from bathing in infected streams, the only streams here.

During the coming year we shall have 50 students graduating from the Adult schools at Kimpese. We rejoice over them and pray that they may be filled with the spirit of Christian service as they begin the work of spreading the Gospel of Christ to the people of Congo.

Learning to walk again at I.M.E.

July

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Healing and Evangelism at I. M. E.

THE NOVELTY of I. M. E. as a new hospital is wearing off and the number of patients in the hospital has stabilized at a lower level. The decrease in patients seemed to coincide with increase in cost for railroad travel. The average daily hospitalisation during the past year was 164 patients and an average of 76 daily visits were made to the dispensary. The maternity work continues about the same as last year with 183 deliveries. We feel the need of a larger maternity work in order to provide more experience for our students.

Since the opening of the institution over 900 paralysed children have been treated in the orthopedic department. An orthopedic technician from England spent six weeks with us training two of our Congolese technicians to make artifical legs. Since then, 16 artificial limbs have been made for amputees. Arrangements are nearly completed for the construction of the leprosy village, and it is felt that a major part of the work will be finished during the coming year.

In the medical school the courses have continued as usual with 58 students in the course for nurses and 11 in the course for aid-midwives. Of these, 24 were from our own mission. On July 2nd eight men received their diplomas as **infirmier,** three of whom were from Vanga.

Our pastor, Mr. Alden of the Swedish mission, has demonstrated a fine spirit during his stay at I. M. E. His regular visits to the hospital have been a blessing to the patients. For the Christians among the patients who cannot leave the hospital, communion is served once a month after the usual communion service. Every Wednesday evening other patients and their helpers meet to listen and learn the word of God from Mr. Alden. Every morning the missionaries, nurses and students and workmen and their wives meet for a short while to sing and read the word of God and pray. Mr. Alden also has a « followers » class from among whom five were baptised this year. Our religious services are being held in the Women's Center building which has been built for the wives of our students, nurses and workmen. We are praying that God will help us to find enough staff to treat patients in body and in their spirits and to lead them to the light of Jesus.

« Menagère » girls learn to sew.

August

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Kikongo : From Mud to Stone

IN JANUARY a new church center was organized at Fatundu, the State post not far from Kikongo, under the direction of a part-time pastor. A mud and thatch church building was soon erected, but the builders underestimated the people's enthusiasm for their new church. The front end of the building had to be knocked out and another ten meters added. Each monthly gathering saw many folks arriving from miles away, each with a rock on his head to put on the pile for a real permanent building. At Easter nineteen were baptized in the Wamba River in the church's first baptism.

Kikongo's Central School began the school year with the walls of its mud schoolrooms bulging as we tried to find room for the largest classes we have ever had. Girls came from many villages for our preparatory class for the **ménagère** (home-making) school and we were glad to welcome others from Boko and Moanza. After the problems of finding enough desks, beds, books and slates for everyone had been solved, we got down to work, determined to make this school year the best we had ever known.

In the **Ménagère** school, under the guidance of « Mama Arley », various delicious dishes came forth from the little kitchen used by the cooking class, and many clothes were properly washed, ironed and mended. The sewing classes began with patches and progressed to beautiful little dresses and shirts and knitted and crocheted sweaters, caps and socks. Most loved of all were the little dolls, complete with curly black hair and big smiles, made by the second-year **ménagère** girls.

Our primary school can no longer be called a boy's school, for we have many of the younger girls who are now able to complete the regular primary school course. Boys and girls in all our schools worked hard this year. They made gardens and we enjoyed more corn, potatoes, tomatoes and other fruits and vegetables than ever before. They faithfully repaired our mud school buildings and dormitories so that we might continue our work. Exams just before Christmas found many vainly seeking a spot where the cold rain would not drip on their papers. But during the vacation that followed, we took new heart as we saw Lewis Brown pound in the stakes for our new permanent seven-room school building.

Water Fountains take the place of spring or stream in Léo.

September

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« New Look » at Léopoldville

LEOPOLDVILLE is becoming a new place. Some of us still think it is a dream, so long have we been used to the old buildings and ways. Our new school of fourteen rooms has been in use since last year. We have four new missionary residences. We have the money and plans for the pastor's house, the dispensary buildings, and teachers houses. In this our new face we have become like our big city — new houses, new rules, new people every day.

Besides our own mission school, our work with the lay schools has increased this year. We are responsible for the protestants in three schools — Camp Chanic with 200 protestants, and two schools at Bandalungwa with from 300 to 400 protestant pupils.

In the dispensary the good work goes on. The beginning of the year the school children were all examined by the government medical people. They had the best report of the city. One reason for this was that just before Christmas vacation we had a general onslought on the worms, and gallons of worm medicine cleaned us out.

In our Christian Center we have gone ahead improving our evening school. We have men's and women's reading classes, classes in English and French. Everyone has classes in Bible. A boy scout troop has been started. We have opened our library for those who want to come at noontime, afternoons and on Sundays. We also have a book store. The church has put church visitors at the T. B. camp, in the government hospital and two others walk the streets of Léo II looking for the lost and the new.

This city is overrun with every kind of religious movement — Jehovah's Witnesses, Kimbanguism and many others whose main aim is against the church — often with anti-white or anti-government strains. Many also think the church was for the village only. In the midst of this we are thankful for an awakened church here in Léo II. All church cards are being changed. Every person who is seen to be weakening in giving or attendance is immediately followed up. In every way possible we are trying to show the zeal and love of God so that the crooked ways of this city will lose their appeal and each man will be controlled by the love of God. Every church member has begun to understand that he too has a responsibility here.

« Saka-saka » — the cuisine Congolaise.

October

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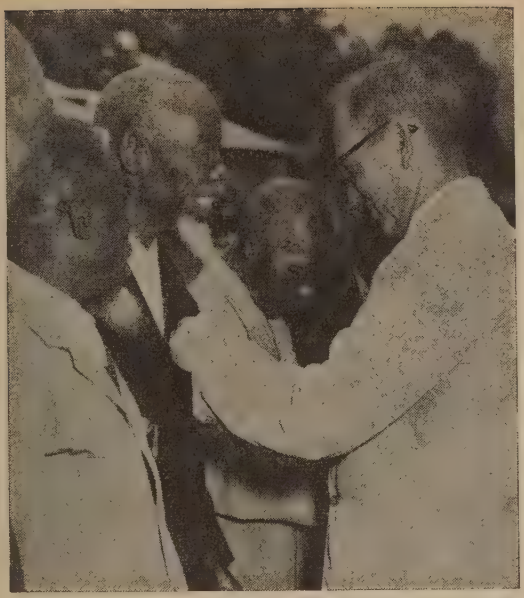
Helicopter at Moanza

THIS past school year has been an eventful one for Moanza. Marguerite Eldredge began the work in September but shortly after became ill and was confined to bed for several months. Then, thanks to special government assistance, she was flown by helicopter to Leopoldville and from there to the United States. We are looking forward to her return sometime in 1958. We are proud of our teaching staff which carried on marvelously with little supervision during the period of « Miggs' » illness. During this period too was appreciated the help of mission school inspector Annis Ford with her special talents in gathering up loose ends.

This year the food problem has not been as acute as in the past. A balanced diet is difficult to achieve, but many more women have come from the villages to sell manioc. The government has done much to see that the people plant large enough gardens, and this is bearing fruit in larger food supplies. Our agricultural program is weak and we need to experiment with a wider variety of indigenous products.

Some of the « menial » tasks occupying missionaries time this year were : repairing the hydraulic ram, installing of the 10 Kilowatt light plant and wiring of the whole station, making a usable road to the beach, thus saving human backs from carrying heavy freight loads up a 4 ½ kilometer hill. The first half of the girl's compound is built; the new surgery is well under way; 24 hospital cubicles are built but there is much grading and erosion prevention to be done. The first of the new boy's dorms is ready for its roof and we have seven new permanent houses for our African personnel.

In the « evangelistic » domain two lay-leadership meetings emphasized Evangelism, the New Life in Christ, Stewardship and the Christian Home and Literacy. A desire was created in the hearts of our people for homes in which the husband and wife would have mutual love and share possessions. During the first part of the year 253 were baptized at some of the Moanza posts. These were reached for the Lord by a staff of 151 village teachers, 13 pastors and 5 under-pastors.



Secretary Ben Armstrong presents medals for 40 years' service to Sona Bata pastors.

November

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Celebrations at Sona Bata

DURING the past year we were very happy to see 581 people baptized in the Sona Bata field. Two churches dedicated new church buildings of brick with iron roofs. But with these happy things some sad matters also existed. The « cult with candles » is interfering with our work in some of the churches, but we thank God that many continue in the true faith. The problem of « Dieu-donné » and his holy water has decreased.

At the Sona Bata Associational meeting the thanks-giving offerings were reported as 62,808 francs or $1256.16. Some of this money was given to help the church center schools buy books, some of it was given to help churches buy cement and roofing irons for permanent buildings. We also gave 30,000 francs to help the regional schools... At the end of the year we had 6279 church members in good standing. During that year they gave for the support of their own work and for the construction of church buildings the sum of 560,000 francs.

We were very happy to have Mbundani at our station this year. Mbundani is the fore-runner of Congo Baptist Convention. Then in May we celebrated our **Cinquante-naire.** That means it is 50 years since the station of Sona Bata was begun. In 1890 the missionaries began the work at Kinzila. Then in 1895 they moved the station to Kifwa. Then in 1907 Mr. MacDiarmid and Mr. Frederickson came to begin the station at Sona Bata. We had a very large celebration those two days. Perhaps nearly 7000 people came from the villages, Leopoldville and every where.

Sona Bata hospital has been happy to have a doctor again. Besides the usual treatment for diseases, and surgical operations, 655 babies were born at Sona Bata during 1956 and 367 during the first half of 1957. Of the later 21 were by Caesarian section. A catechist-teacher is being paid by the hospital to teach the word of God to the patients, working especially with the non-Christians.

When we look at our work in the field of Sona Bata we see many difficult problems. Our station is an old station but much is changing, and many new things are coming to interfere with God's work. But we know that God can help us always. At Sona Bata Congolese and missionaries are working together in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Black and white worship together at the crêche of the baby Jesus.

December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Chiefs Baptised at Vanga

THE BAPTISM of several chiefs was a big item in the Leverville baptismal services in the Vanga field. These chiefs are now strengthening the church in their villages. The examination of inquirers and their baptism brought many into the Vanga church. The Dieudonné movement is disappearing, but there is conflict with the Catholics who are putting a shrine in the center of every village. Our Christian chiefs are strongly opposing this.

Many churches are building permanent structures of cement or brick. Some are having difficulty to carry the financial load of construction and, at the same time, to pay their large staff of teachers. We appreciate the assistance given by the mission for the construction of the permanent church building at the commercial center of Bulungu. The walls are now completed and soon we expect to see the metal roof up.

In the fall, an institute was held to train approximately 20 young lads who had completed sixth grade with no opportunity for further training. They were prepared to teach reading to adults, following the Laubach method and using three tribal languages. We are rejoicing to see the fruits of their work especially with the women.

We continue to have a large work in connection with the Vanga hospital, with a daily average of 97 in-patients and of 232 at the dispensary. Major operations exceeded 900 and there were more than 400 minor operations ; also six hundred mothers gave birth in the maternity. Doctor Osterholm continued to visit Kikongo, Moanza and Boko for surgical and medical work. Daily worship services were conducted in each ward by the hospitals.

Following our central school graduation, 5th and 6th grade students from the regional schools came to the station for their final examinations. It was a disasterous trip for some when the commercial truck which they had hired turned over killing seven students and injuring more than 60 others. We continue to be burdened concerning the shortage of classes for those completing primary school. Of approximately 950 receiving their primary certificates only about 70 may continue in the station subsidized schools. Others may enter unaccredited classes, but many will have no opportunity to continue anywhere.

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